

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island

May 7, 2004

Worcester man is sentenced to 9 & ½ years for gun possession

A federal judge in Providence today sentenced **Victor Baptiste**, of Worcester, Massachusetts, to 115 months in federal prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm. In February, Baptiste admitted that he had a handgun in the trunk of a car when East Providence Police stopped it on I-195 in October 2002.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith imposed in U.S. District Court Providence. Baptiste, 32, of 142 Chino Avenue, Worcester, has been held in federal custody since he was arrested in Georgia in October.

At a hearing in February at which Baptiste pleaded guilty, Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein said that, on October 29, 2002, East Providence Police stopped a car on I-195 for speeding. Baptiste, a passenger in the car, was arrested on charges of possessing marijuana and obstructing a police officer. Police later found a Colt .45 semi-automatic pistol in a white plastic bag in the car's trunk. Baptiste admitted that the gun, which had obliterated serial numbers, was his.

Baptiste was charged with state offenses and held in state custody until January 2003, when he was released on bail. In March 2003, a federal complaint was lodged, charging Baptiste with being a felon in possession of a firearm. Baptiste has several prior felony convictions in Massachusetts for offenses that include robbery, drug trafficking, and firearms violations.

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Deputy U.S. Marshals and ATF agents traced Baptiste to Georgia, where he was arrested on October 6.

East Providence Police and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** investigated the case, with assistance from the **U.S. Marshals Service**. Assistant U.S. Attorney Goldstein prosecuted it. It was prosecuted federally as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes.

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